

Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

816
F

U.S. Dept. of agriculture.

Conserving farm labor... Estimate of
appropriation. 1919.

'42

LIBRARY

OF THE

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Class 1

Book Ag 816 F

8-1577

347154

CONSERVING FARM LABOR, DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY.

TRANSMITTING

COPY OF A COMMUNICATION FROM THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE SUBMITTING A SUPPLEMENTAL ESTIMATE OF APPROPRIATION, REQUIRED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE FOR ASSISTANCE IN SUPPLYING AND CONSERVING FARM LABOR THROUGH COOPERATION WITH STATE, COUNTY, AND LOCAL AGENCIES, FISCAL YEAR 1920.

JANUARY 10, 1919.—Referred to the Committee on Agriculture and ordered to be printed.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT.
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY,
Washington, January 9, 1919.

The SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith for the consideration of Congress copy of a communication from the Secretary of Agriculture of the 7th instant, submitting a supplemental estimate of appropriation, in the sum of \$162,000, required by the Department of Agriculture for assistance in supplying and conserving farm labor through cooperation with State, county, and local agencies, fiscal year 1920.

The necessity for the appropriation and the reasons for the submission of the estimate at this time are fully set forth in the letter of the Secretary of Agriculture herewith.

Respectfully,

CARTER GLASS, *Secretary.*

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY,
Washington, January 7, 1919.

THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY.

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith, for submission to Congress to be included in the agricultural appropriation bill for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1920, the following supplemental estimate:

For assistance in supplying and conserving farm labor through cooperation with State, county, and local agencies, \$162,000.

Shortly after the United States entered the war it was apparent that in certain sections of the country, particularly near the great industrial centers in the North and Northwest, and especially in the vicinity of plants undertaking large war contracts for the Government, there would be a marked shortage of farm labor. It was obvious, too, that on account of the abstraction of labor through enlistments in the Regular Army and through the operations of the draft law, difficulties would be experienced in many sections of the Union. The situation called for constructive action. The Departments of Agriculture and Labor and other agencies, therefore, immediately endeavored to furnish assistance. The Department of Labor undertook to study the available supplies of labor in towns and cities and developed a system of employment agencies for this purpose. One object was to secure information which could be conveyed to the Department of Agriculture and to State agencies as to available labor in urban centers and to have it drawn upon for aid in farming operations in nearby communities.

The Department of Agriculture assumed the task of studying the supplies and needs in rural districts. It arranged to place a man in each State in touch with State agencies, with the special duty of assisting in the mobilization and organization of rural labor. Under the provisions of the food production act, farm labor agents were appointed and have been devoting their entire energies to the problem. During the past year the department has perfected this organization and has enlisted the more active cooperation of the county agents and other extension workers. It has more fully coordinated its activities with the Department of Labor, a representative of this department having been designated a member of the War Labor Policies Board, which was created by the President. It also aided the War Department in the classification of agricultural registrants. Special efforts were made, beginning early in 1918, to impress upon the residents of urban communities the necessity of aiding farmers in the planting and harvesting of their crops. The response to appeals along this line was generous. In Kansas, for example, where the situation was especially difficult, the reports indicate that more than 45,000 workers were supplied to farmers to assist in the wheat harvest. The potato crop in two counties in Texas was saved through the aid of business men in the local communities, and in Illinois 35,000 workers were registered for harvest work. Many other examples could be cited, but the results of all these activities are clearly indicated by the fact that, although the largest acreage on record was planted, the great crops of the year were harvested under difficulties not appreciably greater than those in normal times.

The food production act of November 21, 1918, carries an appropriation of \$162,000 for assistance in supplying farm labor during the current fiscal year. It seems to me highly desirable that the department should continue to aid farmers in every way in securing an adequate supply of farm labor, especially during the period of readjustment, and it is urgently recommended, therefore, that a similar appropriation be included in the regular appropriation bill for 1920, which is now under consideration by the Congress. I may add that the activities of this department in connection with farm labor do not duplicate in any way the work of the Department of Labor, but, on the other hand, they rather supplement it in a very concrete way.

Very truly, yours,

D. F. HOUSTON, *Secretary.*

○



